STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND WELLBEING POLICY

Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the school office.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

(a) our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students
(b) expectations for positive student behaviour
(c) support available to students and families
(d) our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Strathmore North Primary School is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. We understand that students reach their full potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and that a positive school culture where student participation is encouraged and valued, helps to engage students and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are closely linked.

The objective of this policy is to support our school to create and maintain a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment consistent with our school's values.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

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2. School values, philosophy and vision
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POLICY

1. School Profile

Strathmore North Primary School (SNPS) is located Northwest of Melbourne about 10kms from the Central Business District. The school was established in 1961 in an area along the Moonee Ponds Creek. It is in a well-established residential area rich in sporting facilities and service clubs. SNPS has an enrolment of 632 students. Our school is culturally diverse with nearly 40% having a language background other than English (LOTE), with the largest LOTE groups being Turkish, Indian and Chinese. We are proud of our diversity and inclusive school community.

At Strathmore North Primary School, our students are effective learners that are provided with a high-quality, engaging curriculum, which is differentiated to support and enrich each student's learning needs. Our school is an inclusive educational setting that prides itself on the delivery of evidence-based, researched proven practices that make a difference to learning.

Strathmore North Primary School holds high expectations of all stakeholders in the learning process. Staff work together in Professional Learning Communities, dedicated to building teacher capacity, and improving student learning progress and outcomes at all levels.

Our academic, social and extra-curricular activities create opportunities for all students to participate and engage in learning in a respectful and safe learning environment. Our focus is to enhance student wellbeing through the delivery of whole school evidence-based practices and programs which; engage all students socially, emotionally and academically, are embedded into our everyday teaching and learning, and are an intrinsic part of our school culture. This is strongly reflected in our School Strategic Plan.

In 2024, Strathmore North Primary School had 53 equivalent full-time staff: 4 Principal class, 36 teachers and 13 Educational Support Staff. Classroom programs are supported by Specialist Programs which include Physical Education, Science, Visual Arts, and Japanese. Additional learning programs include, a swimming program, inter-school sports, camps, incursions and excursions and student leadership opportunities (school captains, house captains and junior school council members). Lunchtime social activities such as chess, gardening, Japanese, library and Art Clubs help to create a positive and engaging environment for all students while improving attendance, resilience, personal engagement and a sense of belonging.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

Whole School Prevention Statement

Strathmore North Primary School values each student as an individual with a unique personality that complements our diverse community of learners.

Our academic, social and extra -curricular activities create opportunities for all students to participate and engage in education in a harmonious environment.

Our implementation of 'Resilience Rights and Respectful Relationships' throughout the school enhances student engagement and connectedness, whilst ensuring students are equipped with the knowledge and skills to foster positive relationships.

Strathmore North Primary School believes that our school provides a balanced education, which contributes to children's development and encourages them to reach their potential as tolerant, just and responsible members of society.

We believe that our school is a place of education where each child has the right to learn and grow in a supportive environment among people who are caring and co-operative.

We also believe that students will achieve their personal best in a school that works in partnership, with parents and the wider community.

For this to work successfully, we have in place, a set of structures, programs and processes that are directly linked to the promotion of student engagement, attendance and connectedness. Our student values and school vision underpin our school culture.

Our student code of cooperation reflects our Statement of Values:

To provide a safe, harmonious and challenging environment which, embraces the school values, fostering academic, social and emotional wellbeing through a sense of connectedness to peers, teachers and the community and our values, **Be Kind, Be Responsible, Be Respectful, Be Brave,** which have been agreed upon by all members of the Strathmore North Primary School Community.

Strathmore North Primary School's Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our school community. Students, staff and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values of **Be Kind, Be Responsible, Be Respectful, Be Brave**.

Our school's vision is to empower students to reach their personal best and that every child is empowered to learn, achieve and be equipped with the knowledge, skills and personal qualities to positively shape the world around them.

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Strathmore North Primary School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We acknowledge that

some students may need extra social, emotional or educational support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.
A summary of the universal (whole of school), targeted (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

Universal

The following are whole-school strategies and expectations to promote positive behaviour and inclusion:

- maintain high and consistent expectations of all staff, students, parents, and carers
- prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, recognising their fundamental role in building and sustaining student wellbeing
- create a culture that is inclusive, engaging, and supportive
- welcome all parents/carers and respond to them as partners in learning
- analyse and respond to a range of school data, including attendance, Attitudes to School Survey results, parent survey data, student management data, and school-level assessment data
- ensure teachers at Strathmore North Primary School use research-proven, evidence-based instructional strategies and techniques to deliver an explicit, common, and shared model of instruction in all lessons
- adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths, and needs of students, following the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- incorporate the school's Statement of Values into the curriculum and promote them among students, staff, and parents, ensuring they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of the school community
- implement carefully planned transition programs to support students as they move into different stages of their schooling
- acknowledge positive behaviour and student achievement in the classroom and formally during school assemblies and communication with parents
- monitor student attendance and implement improvement strategies at the whole-school, cohort, and individual levels
- provide opportunities for students to contribute to and give feedback on decisions about school operations through the Junior School Council, year group meetings, and Peer Support Groups. Encourage students to speak with their teachers, Year Level Leaders, Assistant Principal, or Principal whenever they have questions or concerns
- create opportunities for cross-age connections among students through athletics, play leader programs, and a buddy program
- ensure all students can self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Officer, PLC Leaders, Assistant Principal, or Principal if they need support or wish to discuss an issue.
- maintain an 'open door' policy where students, staff, parents, and carers are partners in learning
- engage in school-wide positive behaviour support with staff, students, parents, and carers through programs such as:
    - *Resilience, Rights, and Respectful Relationships*
    - *The Resilience Project*

- develop programs, incursions, and excursions to address specific behaviours, such as anger management
- provide opportunities for student inclusion, such as sports teams, clubs, and recess and lunchtime activities.

Targeted

The following are our year-level-specific strategies and expectations to promote positive behaviour and inclusion:

- each year level has a PLC leader who monitors the health and wellbeing of students and serves as a point of contact for students needing additional support
- all Koorie students are connected with our Koorie Engagement Support Officer, who also serves as the SNPS Student Engagement and Wellbeing Officer
- students in Out-of-Home Care are supported in accordance with the Department's policy on *Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care*. This includes being appointed a Learning Mentor, having an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and a Student Support Group (SSG), and being referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- classroom teachers address health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified through student wellbeing data
- English as an Additional Language (EAL) students are supported through our EAL program, and all culturally and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included. This is achieved through curriculum and assessment modifications when required and thorough enrolment interviews to understand their language backgrounds and needed supports. Harmony Day is celebrated annually to recognise and celebrate cultural diversity
- students from refugee backgrounds or international students are supported through social and emotional assistance provided by our SEW leader, detailed enrolment interviews to understand their background, and placement with peers to facilitate a smooth transition.
- a positive and respectful learning environment is provided for students who identify as LGBTIQ+, following the Department's policy on *LGBTIQ Student Support*. This includes implementing our *Resilience, Rights, and Respectful Relationships* program
- students with disabilities are fully supported to engage in learning and school activities in accordance with the Department's policy on *Students with Disability*. This support includes reasonable adjustments to learning programs, consultation with families, and, where required, the formation of student support groups and individual education plans
- aboriginal cultural safety is ensured through an inclusive approach to curriculum planning and the creation of culturally safe environments, including strong representation of Aboriginal authors in the curriculum. Regular IEPs are developed and reviewed for all Aboriginal students, with individual action plans tailored to their needs.

Individual

The following are our individual strategies and expectations to promote positive behaviour and inclusion:

- build constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances

- meet with students and their parents/carers to discuss how best to support the student's engagement with school
- develop Individual Education Plans, Behaviour Support Plans, and Incentive Plans
- consider whether any environmental changes are needed, such as altering the classroom setup
- refer students to:
    - School-based wellbeing supports, such as the Student Welfare Officer
    - Student Support Services
    - Appropriate external supports, including council-based youth and family services, allied health professionals, child mental health services (e.g., RCH), or Child First
    - Re-engagement programs, such as Navigator
- write applications for *Disability Inclusion*
- conduct Student Support Groups
- engage with Student Support Services.

Where necessary, the school will support the student's family to engage by:

- being responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances, health, and wellbeing
- collaborating, where appropriate and with the support of the student and their family, with external allied health professionals, services, or agencies that are supporting the student
- monitoring individual student attendance and developing Attendance Improvement Plans in collaboration with the student and their family
- engaging with regional Koorie Engagement Support Officers
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
    - With a disability
    - In Out-of-Home Care
    - With other complex needs requiring ongoing support and monitoring.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Strathmore North Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Engagement and Wellbeing team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Strathmore North Primary School will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

- personal, health and learning information gathered upon enrolment and while the student is enrolled
- upon enrolment interviews for Year 1 to 6 students
- attendance records
- academic performance
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- attendance, detention and suspension data
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from peers.

5. Student rights and responsibilities

All members of our school community have a right to experience a safe and supportive school environment. We expect that all students, staff, parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity, and model and live our school values. Our school's Statement of Values highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

Strathmore North Primary School aims to promote positive attitudes and generate personal self-esteem in our students. Students are encouraged to make informed decisions and develop a sense of responsibility, to nurture a greater level of self-discipline and an awareness of the positive effects of appropriate behaviour.
Students have the **responsibility** to:

- participate fully in their educational program
- display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect and kindness for themselves, their peers, their teachers and members of the school community
- respect the rights of others to learn
- allow others to express their opinions
- listen to others
- complete classroom tasks to the best of their ability
- follow school rules and model our values
- be honest and truthful about their own behaviour
- manage their own behaviour
- express feelings and actions when an incident has happened
- respect other peoples' property.

Students who may have a complaint or concern about something that has happened at school are encouraged to speak to their parents or carers and approach a trusted teacher or a member of the school leadership team. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our Complaints Policy.

6. Student behavioural expectations and management

Strathmore North Primary School aims to promote positive attitudes and generate respect for self and others in our students. Students are encouraged to make informed decisions and develop a sense of responsibility, to nurture a greater level of self-discipline and an awareness of the positive effects of appropriate behaviour.

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Code of Cooperation. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Strathmore North Primary School's Bullying Prevention Policy.

Violence, bullying, and other offensive and harmful behaviours such as racism, harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated and will be managed in accordance with this policy. Bullying will be managed in accordance with our Bullying Prevention Policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Strathmore North Primary School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on

behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

Our school considers, explores and implement positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as detention, withdrawal of privileges or withdrawal from class.

Disciplinary measures may be used as part of a staged response to inappropriate behaviour in combination with other engagement and support strategies to ensure that factors that may have contributed to the student's behaviour are identified and addressed. Disciplinary measures at our school will be applied fairly and consistently. Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard.

Our Discipline Procedures are structured around the expectation of appropriate behaviour from all students. The emphasis at Strathmore North Primary School is on positive student behaviour. These behaviours are published in the Code of Cooperation reviewed in each class at the start of each school year and revisited regularly.

Disciplinary measures that may be applied include:

- warning a student that their behaviour is inappropriate
- teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- withdrawal of privileges
- referral to the Student Welfare Officer
- restorative practices
- detentions
- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- suspension
- expulsion.

Suspension, expulsion and restrictive interventions are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular situations consistent with Department policy, available at:

- https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suspensions/policy
- https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/policy
- https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy

In line with Ministerial Order 1125, no student aged 8 or younger will be expelled without the approval of the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training.
The Principal of Strathmore North Primary School is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

Corporal punishment is prohibited by law and will not be used in any circumstance at our school.

7. Engaging with families

Strathmore North Primary School values the input of parents and carers, and we will strive to support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. We aim to be partners in learning with parents and carers in our school community.

We work hard to create successful partnerships with parents and carers by:

- ensuring that all parents have access to our school policies and procedures, available on Compass and our website
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff policy
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
- involving families in school decision making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups and developing individual plans for students.

8. Evaluation

Strathmore North Primary School will collect data each year to understand the frequency and types of wellbeing issues that are experienced by our students so that we can measure the success or otherwise of our school-based strategies and identify emerging trends or needs.

Sources of data that will be assessed on an annual basis include:

- Compass data
- Student Attitude to School survey data
- School reports
- Parent Opinion survey data
- School based surveys
- Case management
- CASES21
- SOCS

Strathmore North Primary School will also regularly monitor available data dashboards to ensure any wellbeing or engagement issues are acted upon in a timely manner and any intervention occurs as soon as possible.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

Our school will also ensure it follows the mandatory parent/carer notification requirements with respect to suspensions and expulsions outlined in the Department's policies at:

- Suspension process
- Expulsions - Decision

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The following Department of Education and Training policies are relevant to this Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy:

- Attendance
- Student Engagement
- Child Safe Standards
- Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care
- Students with Disability
- LGBTIQ Student Support
- Behaviour - Students
- Suspensions
- Expulsions
- Restraint and Seclusion

The following school policies are also relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	December 2024
Consultation	Community Engagement Subcommittee 28/11/24 School Council 3/12/24
Approved by	Nicole DiMarco Principal
Next scheduled review date	December 2026